

**Lansford Borough Council
Special Budget Meeting
November 28, 2018**

A special meeting of Lansford Borough Council was held 6:00 p.m. November 28, 2018 at borough hall, 1 W. Ridge Street, Lansford, to discuss the proposed 2019 borough budget.

The meeting was called to order by President Jared Soto and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Rollcall was taken by secretary treasurer Jill Seigendall with the following council members present: John Turcmanovich, Joseph Butrie, Jared Soto, Marie Ondrus, and Irma Leibensperger. Absent were council members Bruce Markovich and Bob Silver, Mayor James Romankow and Solicitor Michael Greek. Two residents and reporter Chris Reber of the Times News Newspaper were in the audience.

A copy of a proposed 2019 budget was given to each council member. President Jared Soto outlined the following items:

2018 Assessment Rate from the Carbon County Assessment Office= \$33,380, 944
2019 Assessment Rate from the Carbon County Assessment Office= \$32,580, 320
Difference in Assessment rates= \$800,624 less for 2019

Millage the past two years:

2016 millage 33.53 was raised 1 mil for 2017 Budget to 34.53
2017 millage 34.53 was raised 1.31 mil for 2018 Budget to 35.84

The main concern for 2019 is going to be General Fund overall. This is not only important now, but into the future. We will be fine in the short term. However, if we are getting to the point where our general fund millage is being maxed out, our options are going to be to reduce expenses or increase the assessment value to make this sustainable over the long term. The current increase is only to sustain what were are doing now, and does not speak to the extra income which is needed to make significant upgrades to borough infrastructure and assets.

Within the General Fund, insurance expenses account for the most significant hit at an estimated \$518,700 for next year (31.9% of total estimated expenses) if insurance rates continue to increase, as they have.

In July there was a Borough News magazine article on how insurance expenses are impacting smaller boroughs due to increasing rates where boroughs now have to make decisions such as providing less service to the community in order to pay for these rising rates.

Changes in Income:

- Section 360- The borough cannot currently accurately project any numbers, but does expect to see an INCREASE in revenue for charges for services once a database is implemented for tracking code complaints. The borough seen an increase in over \$10,000 in monies collected through property maintenance, landlord licensing and moving permits based upon what was budgeted as income from the previous year. Once a more efficient tracking system is in place, we can consider reducing code enforcement hours as code will not need as many hours to do their work with increased efficiency which will decrease expenses.

Changes in Expenses:

- Section 480 Misc.- Workmen's Comp Ins.- rate for 2019 due to the amount of claims is \$65, 920.00 and the budget for these items in 2018 was \$30,000. This is an increase of \$35,920 in expenses to the borough.
Projects/Purchases for 2019 which have been discussed (not a comprehensive list):
 - Borough Garage
 - Dump truck for public works- can purchase any time after May 2019 if do so under the agreement that no payment in the first year as the police cruiser will be paid off in April 2020.
 - Electronic Recycling event- whether we do in town or combine with another borough
 - Jackhammer/air compressor
 - 3 tablets for police vehicles
 - Code enforcement/Municipal Administration software
 - Ordinance Codification
 - Insync (report management system to keep track of complaints and records) and CLEAR (proprietary search program used to track people and businesses)
 - Telephones for Jill and Wendy and (1) computer for Jill in borough office

Personnel decisions to consider:

- Do we want to hire a consultant to assess our current structure and provide recommendations to make sure the borough can remain solvent not only now, but over the long-term.
- The borough would benefit from hiring a borough manager for more regular follow through on administration of borough services across departments.

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- Police. Currently have 6 full-time officers. Do we want to consider not hiring a 7th officer, hiring more part-time officers and allocating the money saved elsewhere.

Secretary Treasurer Jill Seigendall pointed out how the real estate millage relates to each Borough Fund. Using the same total millage as last year 35.84 mills, reducing millage in some funds and increasing it in other funds, still leaves the General Fund with loss of \$100,000.00 so the goal is to reduce expenses by \$100,000.00 in the General Fund.

There was discussion about the high Worker's Compensation Insurance costs which have doubled and healthcare costs. There was discussion about eliminating crossing guards, which would be about a \$11,000.00 savings. This cost is shared with the Panther Valley School District.

Public Courtesy:

Christopher Ondrus, 10 Edgemont Road, asked whether the insurance costs could be broken down into the cost for each department. He pointed out that the millage would have to be raised 3 mills to make up the \$100,000.00 deficit. Jared Soto explained that the General Fund millage limit is 30 mills (without court approval) and it is currently at 29 mills so the most that millage for the General Fund can be raised is 1 mill. Mr. Ondrus urged council to make a plan for a borough garage.

Rose Mary Cannon, 242 W. Ridge Street, questioned the effectiveness of the inlet replacement project, that the new inlets aren't taking the storm water. There was discussion whether the borough or PennDOT created the problem. She suggested that future projects be put out for bid.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn was made by Joseph Butrie, second by Jared Soto and everyone disbursed at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jill Seigendall

Secretary Treasurer